



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Rural Development to Hold Energy Meetings

Columbus, Neb., April 4, 2005 – USDA Rural Development will hold energy meetings in northeast Nebraska regarding the recently announced \$22.8 million in grant funds available nationwide for Renewable Energy or Energy Efficiency Projects for small businesses in communities of 50,000 populations or less and to farmers and ranchers. The Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) was published in the March 28, 2005 Federal Register.

Informational energy program meetings are scheduled as follows:

- Thursday, April 14th
 1. West Point-8:30-10:30 a.m.-Cuming County Court House (lower level) meeting room, 200 South Lincoln St.
 2. Norfolk-1:00-3:00 p.m.-Lifelong Learning Center meeting room, 601 East Benjamin Ave.
 3. Bloomfield-4:00-6:00 p.m.-City Community Center Counsel Room, 101 South Broadway
 - Friday, April 15th
 1. Albion-9:00-11:00 a.m.-K.C. Hall, 521 West Church St.
- Additional meetings will be held in other regions of Nebraska.

Monies are available for Renewable Energy Systems such as wind, solar, biomass, biogas, and geothermal projects. Funding is also available for Energy Efficiency Improvement projects such as improvements to HVAC systems, insulation, refrigeration, lighting, pumping systems, air systems, motor systems, irrigation efficiency improvements, etc. Businesses interested in energy efficiency improvements to their business should consider this program for potential funding assistance. Farmers and ranchers may be assisted with irrigation system energy improvements, methane digesters for livestock waste, grain handling systems, wind turbines, solar systems, etc.

Grants are available for commercially available or pre-commercially available technologies for up to 25 percent of eligible project costs. Renewable Energy System requests can be considered for a grant minimum of \$2,500 and maximum of \$500,000. Energy Efficiency Improvement requests can be for a grant minimum of \$2,500 and \$250,000 maximum. Applications must be submitted to the USDA Rural Development Beatrice, Neb. Field Office postmarked no later than June 27, 2005.

Complete application information may be obtained by contacting Dan Laska, USDA Rural Development, 3276 53rd Avenue Columbus, Neb. 68601, (402) 564-0506 ext. 4.

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